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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT & TRADEMARK OFFICE

IN RE APPLICATION OF:

Hironori FUJIOKA

: EXAMINER: Kastler

SERIAL NO:

FILED: Herewith

: GROUP ART UNIT: 1746

FOR: METHOD OF PRODUCING REDUCED IRON AND PRODUCTION FACILITIES THEREFOR

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS WASHINGTON, D.C. 20231

SIR:

Prior to an examination on the merits, please amend the above-identified patent application as follows:

IN THE SPECIFICATION

Page 1, before the first line, please insert the following sentence:

-- This application is a Division of application Serial No. 09/386,291, filed on August

31, 1999.--

IN THE CLAIMS

Please cancel Claims 1-3 and 14-22 without prejudice.